DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 108 227 CS 202 112

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TITLE	Development of Beginning Handwriting Instruction: Level One.
INSTITUTION	Southwest Regional Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, Los Alamitos, Calif.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
REPORT NO	SWRL-TN-3-72-30
PUB DATE	Sep 72
NOTE	52p.; Some pages have marginal reproducibility
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.76 HC-$3.32 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS	Educational Programs; Educational Research; Handwriting; *Handwriting Development; *Handwriting Instruction; *Handwriting Materials; *Handwriting Skills; Kindergarten Children; Primary Education; Teaching Guides

ABSTRACT

The 1971-1972 developmental tryout of level one of the Southwest Regional Laboratory (SWRL) Composition Skills Program is described in this report, and results obtained in a wide range of school locations are detailed. Level one is designed to promote beginning manuscript printing skills and is normally administered in kindergarten. A variety of materials were utilized, and five types of lessons were provided within each of the following five six-week units: letter formation, letter formation practice, written and oral exercises, word formation exercises, and criterion checks. In addition to these lesson types, a set of flashcards was provided which included 26 cards with capital and lower-case letters on the front of each card and 9 flashcards containing the digits one through nine. The handwriting program was tried out in a total of four kindergarten classes in four districts divided by socioeconomic level and predominant ethnic composition. The level-one materials and procedures were found to be highly effective in promoting letter formation and in generating positive pupil attitudes toward handwriting facilities. Specific revisions as a result of the tryout are detailed, and the revised teacher's guide is included. (TS)

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SOUTHWEST REGIONAL LABORATORY TECHNICAL NOTE

DATE: September 26, 197

NO: TN 3-72-30

TITLE: DEVELOPMENT OF BEGINNING HANDWRITING INSTRUCTION: LEVEL ONE

AUTHOR: Ginny Supple, Fred Niedermeyer, and Edys Quellmalz

ABSTRACT

This report describes the 1971-72 developmental tryout of Level 1 (handwriting) of the SWRL Composition Skills Program and details results obtained in a wide range of school locations. The Level 1 materials and procedures were found to be highly effective in promoting letter-formation skills and in generating positive pupil attitudes toward handwriting activities. Specific revisions as a result of the tryout are detailed, and the revised Teacher's Guide is included.

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DEVELOPMENT OF BEGINNING HANDWRITING INSTRUCTION: LEVEL ONE

Ginny Supple, Fred Niedermeyer, and Edys Quellmalz

Level 1 of the SWRL Composition Skills Program is designed to promote beginning manuscript printing skills and is normally administered in kindergarten. Initial formulation of the program began during the Fall of 1970. An experimental study was conducted during the Spring of 1971 which investigated the effects of two treatment variables on kindergarten handwriting performance (TM 3-72-01). Based on the results of this study, specifications were generated for a five-unit, teacher-administered program for the 1971-72 school year (TN 3-71-18). Materials were developed and three of the five units were tried out during the Spring of 1972 in four kindergarten classes encompassing a wide range of school locations and conditions. This report describes the Level 1 Program, the tryout procedures, and the results. A discussion of the results and a listing of revisions are also included.

METHOD

OUTCOMES

Level 1 of the SWRL Composition Skills Program was designed to teach the following handwriting skills:

- Print each capital and lowercase letter of the alphabet.
- Write the digits 1 through 9.

MATERIALS

Instruction and practice for the above outcomes were provided by a variety of materials. The materials were organized into 20-minute

lessons that were scheduled three times a week. The entire program consisted of 90 lessons divided into five six-week units of 18 lessons each. Only the first three units (54 lessons) were tried out in the Spring of 1972.

Five types of lessons were provided within each unit and are described below.

- Letter Formation. These exercises presented initial instruction and practice on the formation of each letter or digit. Within each exercise the children progressed from tracing a letter to forming it by referring to the model at the top of the page and at the left of each line. Two letters (usually the upper- and lowercase version of the same letter) were introduced in each Letter Formation Exercise, and the children wrote each letter a total of 24 times. There were six Letter Formation Exercises in each of the five program units for a total of 30 exercises, although only the first three units were tried out.

- Letter Formation Practice. These lessons provided a review of four previously introduced letters, so that there were three Letter Formation Practice Exercises in each unit providing practice on all 12 letters and digits taught in each unit. Practice was guided by model letters presented at the left of the page.

- Written and Oral Exercises. These were two-part exercises in which the children practiced forming letters by copying written models or hearing a letter name. On the front of the exercise written practice was prompted by letters that were presented at the left of the page. The children copied each letter once in the first column, received teacher-provided feedback, then copied all the letters again in the second and third columns. On the back of the exercise the teacher orally presented each letter while the children wrote the letters in the first column. After teacher-feedback, the children wrote the letters again in the second and third columns. There were five Written and Oral Exercises in each unit.

- Word Formation Exercises. Two kinds of exercises provided practice in writing letter patterns to form words:

    - Word Copying (Unit 1). In the first unit children practiced writing letters to form words by copying words provided as models. There were three Word Copying Exercises in the first unit.

. Sentence Completion. Further practice in writing letter patterns in words was provided by illustrated exercies in which the children filled in blanks in sentences by copying model words. With assistance, the children could then read the sentences which described the illustrations. There were three Sentence Completion Exercises in each of Units 2 through 5.

. Criterion Checks. At the end of each unit Criterion Checks were provided which enabled the teacher to identify children who needed additional practice on letters and digits taught in the unit. Each of the 12 letters and digits taught in the unit was presented by the teacher orally on the front of the exercise and visually by a printed model on the back of the exercise. Legibility scores were put on a Criterion Check Record Sheet.

In addition to these lesson types, a set of flashcards was provided which included 26 cards with capital and lowercase letters on the front of each card and nine flashcards containing the digits 1 through 9. These cards were designed to be shown to the children as models during initial instruction and follow-up. The teachers also received a Teacher's Guide listing materials, general teaching procedures, SWRL tryout requirements, procedures for specific lesson types, and a letter evaluation guide. Also provided was a lesson sequence chart showing the unit organization of the exercises, the sequence in which letters and digits were introduced, and a suggested schedule to follow.

SAMPLE

Level 1 of the Composition Skills Program was tried out in a total of four kindergarten classes in four districts. To determine how well the program would operate in a variety of school settings, the tryout schools were selected to represent a wide range of socio-economic and ethnic populations. The following list indicates the specific distribution of the schools according to districts, socio-economic level, and predominant ethnic composition:

District	School	Socio-Economic Level	Ethnic Composition
A	I	upper-middle-income suburban	White
B	II	lower-middle-income suburban	White
C	III	lower-income inner-city	Mexican-American
D	IV	lower-income inner-city	Black

For each of the four tryout schools a non-tryout comparison school was designated. Comparison schools were similar to tryout schools on the basis of socio-economic level, ethnic composition, size, and geographic location.

PROCEDURES

One-hour teacher-training sessions were conducted at each school by the Laboratory staff. Teachers were given materials and Teacher's Guides at this time. The outcomes and materials comprising the program were described and examined, and teacher procedures were presented and discussed.

Teacher-training sessions took place during early January of 1972. Teachers were to begin the exercises the following week. Schedules were provided which indicated at what dates the various lessons should be completed so as to allow for completion of the three units (54 exercises) by the end of the school year.

DATA SOURCES AND TESTING PROCEDURES

Pupil Performance Tests

In January the four tryout classes and the four comparison classes were given a handwriting pretest. In late May, at the end of the tryout, these same eight classes were administered an alternate form as a posttest. SWRL staff members administered both tests. On the pretest the children were asked to write ten dictated letters and numbers and three dictated sentences on the front of the test. Then they were asked to copy ten letters and numbers on the back of the test sheet. On the posttest the children were asked only to copy ten letters and numbers on the front and ten letters and numbers on the back of the test sheet. A copy of the posttest and instructions for administering it are contained in Appendix A. (See TM 3-72-07 for the copy of the pretest.)

Scoring of the pretest and posttest was according to the Letter Evaluation Guide (contained in TM 3-72-07). The agreement correlation between two SWRL staff members scoring an initial sample of 15 pretests was .91. The average correlation of agreement between three staff members scoring a sample of 15 posttests was .89.

Because the test-scoring procedures for Level 1 of the Composition Skills Program involves a considerable amount of staff time, a random sample of ten children was selected from each kindergarten class for analysis. Thus, the sample of students whose pretest handwriting performance was analyzed consisted of 80 children (ten randomly selected from each of the four tryout and four comparison classes). Another random sample of identical size was used for the posttest. To

insure that raters had no knowledge of tryout and comparison classes, tests were coded and randomly sequenced prior to scoring.

Pupil Preference Inventories

A random sample of 40 kindergarten children (five from each of the eight classes) was interviewed by SWRL staff members, using the tryout or comparison group Pupil Preference Inventory. Each child was interviewed individually and asked to state whether he liked various activities "a whole lot," "a lot," "just o.k.," or "not at all." Six of the items (three related to general writing activities and three related to non-writing activites) on the tryout and control inventories were identical. Four additional questions appeared only on the tryout inventory and concerned specific types of lessons in the handwriting program (Letter Formation Exercises, Letter Formation Exercise illustrations, Sentence Completion Exercises, and Written and Oral Exercises). Copies of the Pupil Preference Inventory for both tryout and comparison classes are contained in Appendix B. To compare the tryout and control children on the three general writing activites and the three non-writing activities, SWRL staff members scored each item by assigning a numerical value to each preference statement:

4 - a whole lot
3 - a lot
2 - just o.k.
1 - not at all

For each child in the tryout and comparison classes, a mean score for the three writing items and a mean score for the three non-writing items were computed.

Lesson Observations

During the tryout, classroom lessons were observed by staff members on a regular basis. Procedures for systematically documenting these observations were operationalized (TN 3-72-15). Essentially, these procedures required the observer to write, following each observation, a summary of all that was seen and heard during the lesson. Inferences about pupil attitudes and teacher performance, and implications for program materials and procedures were then recorded on the report form. In all, 13 lessons were observed and documented at the kindergarten level.

Teacher Questionnaires

Meetings were held with all the Level 1 teachers near the end of the school year (late May). At this time staff members interviewed the teachers, using questionnaires designed to elicit specific comments, criticisms, revisions suggestions, and teacher attitudes toward the program. A copy of the questionnaire is contained in Appendix C.

RESULTS

PUPIL PERFORMANCE

Table 1 presents the pretest and posttest percentage distribution of ratings on letter- and number-copying items for the kindergarten tryout and comparison classes. Cumulative percentage distributions for each testing appear in parentheses. (To be comparable to the 20 copying items comprising the posttest, only ratings on the 10 copying items from the pretest are shown in Table 1, i.e., ratings on the 10 dictation items from the pretest are not shown, but may be seen in TM 3-72-07.)

TABLE 1

Pretest and Posttest Percentage Distribution of Ratings for Kindergarten Tryout and Comparison Classes on Letter Copying Items (Cumulative Percentages in Parentheses)

Ratings	Tryout Children		Comparison Children	
	Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest
5 (very legible)	0 (0)	8 (8)	0 (0)	2 (2)
4 (quite legible)	4 (4)	23 (31)	12 (12)	12 (14)
3 (fairly legible)	19 (23)	59 (90)	35 (47)	58 (72)
2 (barely legible)	47 (70)	7 (97)	38 (85)	19 (91)
1 (completely illegible)	15 (85)	3 (100)	10 (95)	6 (97)
0 (no response)	15 (100)	0 (100)	5 (100)	3 (100)
No. of subjects:	40	40	40	40
Total no. of letter responses rated:	400	800	400	800

From the data in Table 1, it may be seen that 47 percent of the pretest ratings for the comparison children were in the "3" through "5" range (fairly legible or better), whereas only 23 percent of the pretest ratings for the tryout children fell in this range. On the posttest, however, 90 percent of the ratings for tryout children were "3" or higher, versus 72 percent for the comparison children.

Table 2 is similar to Table 1 but is broken out by school districts. As may be seen, the percentages of posttest responses marked "3" or higher for the tryout classes in Districts A, B, C, and D were 96 percent, 86 percent, 95 percent, and 83 percent, respectively. In the corresponding four comparison classes, the percentages in Districts A, B, C, and D were 74 percent, 75 percent, 54 percent, and 86 percent, respectively. Only in District D was the percentage of ratings of "3" or higher not appreciably different between the comparison school and the tryout school. However, it may be seen that 61 percent of the pretest ratings for the comparison school in District D were "3" or higher, versus only 2 percent for the tryout school; thus gains of the tryout class were more dramatic.

PUPIL PREFERENCES

Table 3 shows the mean ratings and standard deviations on the Pupil Preference Inventory for the writing and non-writing activities of the tryout and comparison children. The mean rating for the tryout and comparison children on the non-writing items was identical. However, children in the tryout class rated writing activities significantly higher than comparison children ($p.<.05$).

TABLE 2

Pretest and Posttest Percentage Distribution of Ratings for Kindergarten Tryout and Comparison Classes in Four School Districts on Letter Copying Items (Cumulative Percentage Distributions in Parentheses)

Ratings	District A*				District B				District C				District D			
	Tryout		Comparison		Tryout		Comparison		Tryout		Comparison		Tryout		Comparison	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
5 (very legible)	1 (1)	15 (15)	0 (0)	3 (3)	0 (0)	4 (4)	0 (0)	2 (2)	0 (0)	12 (12)	1 (1)	2 (2)	0 (0)	2 (2)	1 (1)	3 (3)
4 (quite legible)	8 (9)	31 (46)	23 (23)	10 (13)	5 (5)	24 (28)	6 (6)	13 (15)	4 (4)	20 (32)	14 (15)	4 (6)	0 (0)	16 (18)	5 (6)	22 (25)
3 (fairly legible)	29 (38)	50 (96)	24 (47)	61 (74)	29 (34)	58 (86)	26 (32)	60 (75)	18 (22)	63 (95)	34 (49)	48 (54)	2 (2)	65 (83)	55 (61)	61 (86)
2 (barely legible)	45 (83)	3 (99)	34 (81)	19 (93)	42 (76)	10 (96)	48 (80)	20 (95)	62 (84)	4 (99)	37 (86)	26 (80)	37 (39)	12 (95)	34 (95)	10 (96)
1 (completely illegible)	7 (90)	1 (100)	14 (95)	7 (100)	11 (87)	4 (100)	13 (93)	5 (100)	7 (91)	1 (100)	7 (93)	10 (90)	35 (74)	5 (100)	5 (100)	4 (100)
0 (no response)	10 (100)	0 (100)	5 (100)	0 (100)	13 (100)	0 (100)	7 (100)	0 (100)	9 (100)	0 (100)	7 (100)	10 (100)	26 (100)	0 (100)	0 (100)	0 (100)

No. of letter responses rated:
Pretest - 100 per class
Posttest - 200 per class

No. of subjects:
Pretest - 10 per class
Posttest - 10 per class

*A: upper-middle-income, suburban, White
B: lower-middle-income, suburban, White
C: lower-income, inner-city, Mexican-American
D: lower-income, inner-city, Black

TABLE 3

Mean Ratings and Standard Deviations on the Pupil Preference Inventories for Writing and Non-Writing Activities of Tryout and Comparison Children

	Writing Items		Non-Writing Items	
	$\bar{X}$	s.d.	$\bar{X}$	s.d.
Tryout Children (n=20)	2.8	.66	3.0	.71
Comparison Children (n=15)	2.4	.46	3.0	.53
	(t=2.3, $p<.05$, s.d.)		(t=.53, $p>.05$, n.s.d.)	

Table 4 indicates percentage distributions for how well the tryout children stated that they liked various activities on the Pupil Preference Inventory. As may be seen, the tryout children showed high preferences for handwriting activities (Items 1, 4, and 7) as frequently, if not more so, than for other school activities (Items 3, 6, and 9). They also showed a high degree of preference for activities related to the specific materials in the Level 1 Program (Items 2, 5, 8, and 10).

LESSON OBSERVATIONS AND TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES

Lesson observations and teacher meetings yielded much information concerning use of the program at the kindergarten level. This information is summarized below according to various categories.

- Pacing. As of late May, all four tryout classes were in the third unit between Exercises 9 and 17. Since Unit 3 was the final unit at that time with the last exercise being Exercise 18, it appeared that most classes would complete the program.

- Teacher Affect. All four tryout teachers felt that the program was appropriate for most of the children. All teachers felt that the exercises were generally geared to the children's interests and rated the children's overall reaction to the program as fairly to very enthusiastic. All of the teachers stated they would use the program again.

- Time Per Lesson. Most teachers conducted three exercises a week, with each lesson lasting from 15 to 25 minutes. One teacher, who fell behind in scheduling three lessons a week, made up for lost time by administering five lessons a week near the end of the school year with no apparent difficulty. Most teachers commented that at the beginning of the program the Letter Formation Exercises took more than 25 minutes. After the children became accustomed to the program, however, the exercises then averaged 15 to 25 minutes, except for one class which continued to take 25 to 35 minutes per lesson throughout the program.

- Teacher's Guide. All the teachers, with the exception of one who mislaid her Teacher's Guide, felt that the procedures for specific lesson types were very clear and helpful as was the Teacher's Guide itself.

TABLE 4

Percentage Distribution of Pupil Preference Inventory Responses by Kindergarten Children in the Tryout Classes

N = 20	a) In school this year did you ever... yes	a) no	b) Do you like to... yes	b) no	c) Do you like it... a whole lot	a lot	just ok
1. Write letters or numbers on paper?	90	10	89	11	25	56	19
2. Write letters on papers like this? (Show Unit 1, Lesson 10.)	100	0	90	10	17	44	39
3. Listen to other boys and girls share things they've brought to school?	90	10	100	0	11	50	39
4. Write your name?	100	0	100	0	25	45	30
5. Write letters that finish a picture like this? (Show Unit 2, Lesson 8.)	95	5	100	0	31	38	31
6. Read stories?	85	15	94	6	37	44	19
7. Copy letters or words the teacher shows you?	85	15	94	6	25	31	44
8. Write words that fit into sentences like these? (Show Unit 3, Lesson 10.)	100	0	100	0	30	35	35
9. Draw pictures with crayons or paint?	100	0	95	5	47	32	21
10. Write letters when the teacher says them out loud?	95	5	95	5	33	39	28

- Letter Formation Exercises. Most children enjoyed the exercises, especially the illustrations. The teachers felt that the basic problems of the exercises were: (1) minor printing errors on the sheets themselves; (2) certain letters and numbers requiring some revisions; (3) model letters to the left being in an awkward position for the children to see as they wrote; and (4) stroke sequence arrows perhaps being not too functional.

- Letter Formation Practice Exercises. Problems encountered here were: (1) this type of lesson being very time-consuming, especially for slower children; and (2) above-average children not needing these practice exercises as part of the regular program.

- Written and Oral Exercises. These exercises were felt to be: (1) time-consuming for the teacher, as each child's work must be checked; (2) difficult for the children because of recognition and recall of letter names; and (3) unnecessarily illustrated after Unit 2 regarding identification of rows and columns.

- Word Copying Exercises. The teachers (and children) liked these exercises and felt there should be more of them rather than just those in Unit 1, since the children enjoyed printing words.

- Sentence Completion Exercises. The children enjoyed these exercises. Problems encountered by teachers were: (1) the type font in later exercises being incorrect (i.e., not the same as what the children were to print); (2) more tranistion needed in the progression from one-inch to one-fourth-inch model words to be filled in; and (3) spacing of words using one finger or the letter "o" should be part of the teacher procedures, so that teachers can help children space words correctly.

- Criterion Checks. In general, teachers liked these exercises, but there was difficulty in connection with recognition and recall of letters from an oral stimulus.

- Criterion Check Record Sheet. This sheet was a good idea to most teachers, but the letters and numbers should have appeared in the order in which they came in the Criterion Checks.

A listing of teachers' responses to the questionnaire appears in Appendix C.

DISCUSSION AND REVISIONS

Pupil performance data for Level 1 revealed that the exercises were successful in promoting handwriting skills. The program consistently

generated high performance across a wide range of school locations and conditions. In addition to producing improved letter formation, preference data indicated a high degree of positive pupil affect toward the program and toward writing activities in general.

Lesson observations and teacher meetings provided information useful at the kindergarten level for formulating program revisions. Specific changes specified on the basis of this tryout may be examined in Appendix D. The primary revisions are as follows:

- The Letter Formation Practice Exercises will be removed from the regular program and established as remedial or additional practice exercises to be used before or after Criterion Checks.
- The Written and Oral Exercises will be deleted from the program, mainly due to the difficulty the children had with recall and recognition of letters with their names.
- Because of the above two changes, the program will consist of five units with 12 exercises in each unit, as opposed to 18 per unit previously.
- Every exercise in Unit 1 will contain shading between the guideline sets to help prevent children from printing letters in the wrong place.
- All stories for the Story Writing Exercises will be rewritten using the Mod 2 First-Year Storybook Words.
- The Teacher's Guide and instructional procedures have already been revised to reflect the above program revisions (see Appendix E).

REFERENCES

Hirsch and Niedermeyer, "The Effects of Tracing Prompts and Discrimination Training on Kindergarten Handwriting Performance," SWRL TM 3-72-01, 1972.

Niedermeyer, "1971-72 Specifications for the SWRL K-3 Composition Skills Program," SWRL TN 3-71-18, 1971.

Niedermeyer, Quellmalz, and Trithart, "Functions of Status Testing in the Development of an Instructional Program," SWRL TM 3-72-07, 1972.

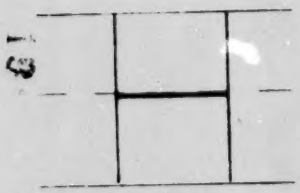
Niedermeyer, "Observation Procedures for Classroom Tryout of Instructional Materials and Procedures," SWRL TN 3-72-15, 1972.

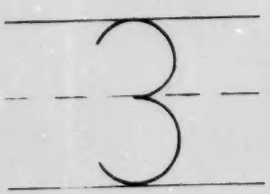
APPENDIX A--POSTTEST

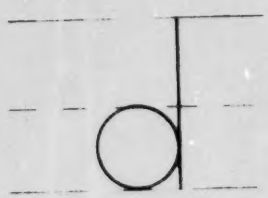
Side B

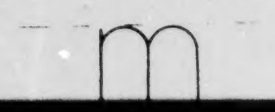
SWRL LEVEL 1 COMPOSITION SKILLS TEST

Child's Name _____









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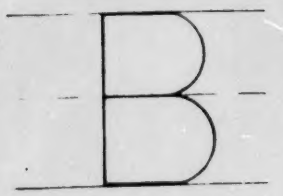

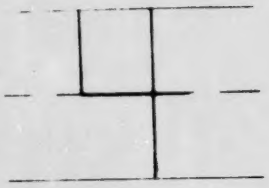

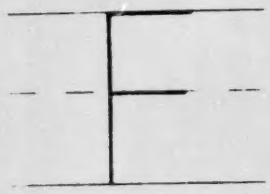

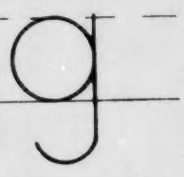

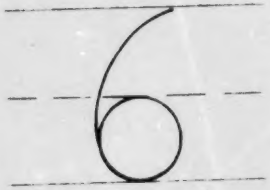

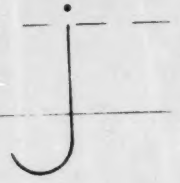

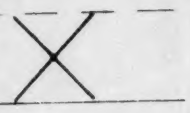

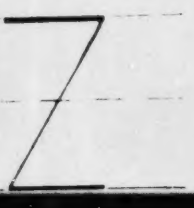

20

How to administer the test

- Give each child a pencil and a copy of the test with his name on it.
- Have the children copy each of the 20 letters that appear on the test.
- Tell them to print each letter as best they can.
- Score each completed test according to the "Letter Evaluation Guide" on the back of this Record Sheet.

Teacher's Name _____

School District _____

Date _____

___ Pretest ___ Posttest (Check one)

Student	Unit 1				Unit 2				Unit 3				Unit 4				Unit 5			
	T	e	H	w	N	o	s	3	J	m	R	4	F	g	K	6	j	x	Q	Z
1																				
2																				
3																				
4																				
5																				
6																				
7																				
8																				
9																				
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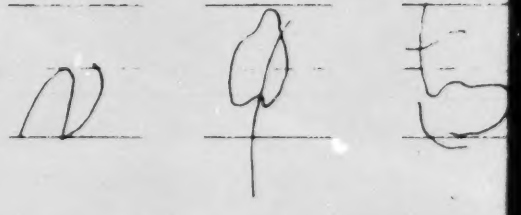
32																				
33																				
34																				
35																				

Advanced Placement Considerations: It is possible to use this test as a pretest at the beginning of the year to determine advanced placement [illegible]. As may be seen on this Record Sheet, letters on the test are keyed to the five instructional units of the Level 1 Composition Skills Program. The test contains four letters from each unit, for a total of 20 letters. For any of the program units on which the child receives a rating of *at least 4* for all four letters, instructional exercises [illegible] may be administered.

LETTER EVALUATION GUIDE

Evaluating the quality of letters the children make involves judgements about the appropriateness of the shape of a letter and its degree of legibility. To score a child's test, rate each of his letters using the five point legibility scale below. Write each rating in the appropriate row and column of the "Record Sheet."

RATING	MEANING	EXAMPLES
5	**Very Legible**: Letter matches model. No further practice is required.	
4	**Quite Legible**: Letter closely approximates model's size and shape. Some additional practice may be desirable.	
3	**Fairly Legible**: Letter deviates somewhat from model's size and shape. Additional practice is necessary.	
2	**Barely Legible**: Letter's size and shape deviate markedly from model, or letter is reversed or inverted. Substantial instruction and practice is necessary.	
1	**Illegible or No Response**: Letter does not approximate model. Repeat entire letter formation instructional sequence (Letter Formation Exercises, Practice Exercises, Copying and Oral Exercises) with the child individually	

APPENDIX B

PUPIL PREFERENCE INVENTORY
LEVEL 1 OF THE COMPOSITION SKILLS PROGRAM
TRYOUT GROUP

TEACHER _____
DATE _____
EXAMINER _____

Directions

I. Make the child feel at ease.
II. Then say, "I AM GOING TO ASK YOU SOME EASY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE THINGS YOU DO IN SCHOOL
III. For each item below, ask the series of three questions (a,b,c), and record the child's responses. If the child responds negatively to the first question ("IN SCHOOL THIS YEAR DID YOU EVER...?"), try to determine if he really hasn't participated in the activity or simply fails to recognize it from the description given.

	a) IN SCHOOL THIS YEAR DID YOU EVER...?		b) DO YOU LIKE TO...?		c) DO YOU LIKE IT...?		
	yes	no	yes	no	A WHOLE LOT,	A LOT, or	JUST OK
1. WRITE LETTERS OR NUMBERS ON PAPER?	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
2. WRITE LETTERS ON PAPERS LIKE THIS? (Show Unit 1, Lesson 10.)	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
3. LISTEN TO OTHER BOYS AND GIRLS SHARE THINGS THEY'VE BROUGHT TO SCHOOL?	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
4. WRITE YOUR NAME?	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
5. WRITE LETTERS THAT FINISH A PICTURE LIKE THIS? (Show Unit 2, Lesson 8.)	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
6. READ STORIES?	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
7. COPY LETTERS OR WORDS THE TEACHER SHOWS YOU?	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
8. WRITE WORDS THAT FIT INTO SENTENCES LIKE THESE? (Show Unit 3, Lesson 10.)	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
9. DRAW PICTURES WITH CRAYONS OR PAINT?	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
10. WRITE LETTERS WHEN THE TEACHER SAYS THEM OUT LOUD?	___	___	___	___	___	___	___

APPENDIX B CONTINUED

PUPIL PREFERENCE INVENTORY
LEVEL 1 OF THE COMPOSITION SKILLS PROGRAM
CONTROL GROUP

TEACHER _____
DATE _____
EXAMINER _____

Directions

I. Make the child feel at ease.
II. Then say, "I AM GOING TO ASK YOU SOME EASY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE THINGS YOU DO IN SCHOOL."
III. For each item below, ask the series of three questions (a,b,c), and record the child's responses. If the child responds negatively to the first question ("IN SCHOOL THIS YEAR DID YOU EVER...?"), try to determine if he really hasn't participated in the activity or simply fails to recognize it from the description given.

	a) IN SCHOOL THIS YEAR DID YOU EVER...?		b) DO YOU LIKE TO...?		c) DO YOU LIKE IT...?		
	yes	no	yes	no	A WHOLE LOT,	A LOT, or	JUST OK
1. WRITE LETTERS OR NUMBERS ON PAPER?	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
2. LISTEN TO OTHER BOYS AND GIRLS SHARE THINGS THEY'VE BROUGHT TO SCHOOL?	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
3. WRITE YOUR NAME?	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
4. READ STORIES?	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
5. COPY LETTERS OR WORDS THE TEACHER SHOWS YOU?	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
6. DRAW PICTURES WITH CRAYONS OR PAINT?	___	___	___	___	___	___	___

APPENDIX C
(Responses of Four Tryout Teachers)

SWRL FIRST-YEAR COMPOSITION SKILLS PROGRAM

Spring, 1972

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

The SWRL First-Year Composition Skills Program is in its second year of development. In order that we may evaluate and further improve the program, it is essential that we obtain your comments, criticisms, and suggestions with this questionnaire. Thank you.

1. Please indicate the last exercise completed by your children. (If your children were not grouped, please complete Group 1 only.)
   Group 1: 23-27 children; Unit 3; Exercise 9-17
   Group 2: _____ children; Unit _____; Exercise _____
   Group 3: _____ children; Unit _____; Exercise _____
   Non-participants: _____ children

2. Is the program appropriate for most of your children?
   (4) yes _____ no

3. What was the overall reaction of your class to the program?
   (2) very enthusiastic _____ fairly unenthusiastic
   (2) fairly enthusiastic _____ very unenthusiastic
   _____ neutral

4. How long was each lesson, on the average?
   _____ less than 15 minutes (1) 25 to 35 minutes
   (3) 15 to 25 minutes _____ more than 35 minutes

5. Were the procedures for the specific lesson types clear and helpful to administering the exercises?
   (3) yes _____ no (1) did not use

6. Was the Teacher's Guide clear and complete?
   (3) yes _____ no (1) did not use

7. Would you use the program again?
   (4) yes _____ no

8. May we please have your comments and suggestions regarding the five lesson types provided within the units?
   a) Letter Formation Exercises:

APPENDIX C CONTINUED

b) Letter Formation Practice (Review):

c) Written and Oral Exercises:

d) Word Copying Exercises:

e) Sentence Completion Exercises:

f) Criterion Checks:

9. Please write below specific comments, criticisms, or suggestions not already covered. You may want to comment on individual exercises, illustrations, or specific problems you encountered.

APPENDIX D

SPECIFICATION OF 1972-73 REVISIONS

Level 1 revisions in the Composition Skills Program are described below by component. The revision of all materials should be completed for review by August 11. Materials will be submitted to DRS (for production), as completed and reviewed.

TEACHER'S GUIDE

1. Revised and rewritten by Fred Niedermeyer and Ginny Supple.

EXERCISE SEQUENCE

1. Revised and updated by Ginny Supple.

SWRL LEVEL 1 COMPOSITION SKILLS TEST RECORD CARD

1. Change the letters and numbers to be copied as follows:

FROM	TO	FROM	TO
Unit 1 - T,e,H,w	T,e,H,w	Unit 3 - d,m,B,4	d,m,s,5
Unit 2 - N,o,s,3	N,o,r,2	Unit 4 - F,g,K,6	f,g,C,6
		Unit 5 - j,x,Q,Z	j,x,V,y

2. Supply each teacher with two copies.

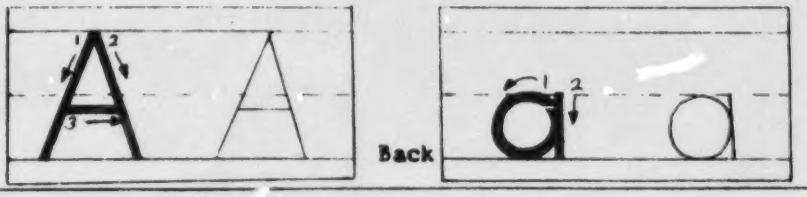
LETTER AND NUMERAL CARDS

1. Delete from the front of the letter cards lowercase letters and place them on the back of the cards.

2. Add to the bold-faced model letters (uppercase on the front, lowercase on the back) the numbered stroke-sequence arrows, and place these stroke-sequence models to the left of the card.

3. Add a regular model letter (without stroke-sequence arrows and in a lighter font) on the right side of the card (both front and back for upper- and lowercase letters).

Example:



LETTER FORMATION EXERCISES

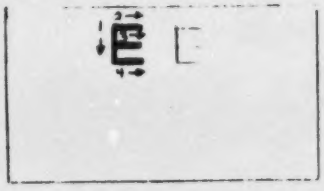
1. For suggested letter revisions for Level 1 of the Composition Skills Program, see the Observation Book and individual Teacher Meeting reports.*

2. Change the type font of the unit and exercise identification to a lighter and smaller font, with the exercise description coming directly below the unit and exercise numbers.

3. Delete the model letters to the left of the page and the vertical line separating them from the rest of the page.

4. Add one regular model letter at the top of the page in right center to the already existing stroke-sequence model letter, which moves to left center.

   Example:



5. Increase the number of responses on each side of the exercise from 24 to 28 (seven per row with four rows). In the first unit only one side of the exercise is to be given in one time period, but by Unit 2 both sides of the exercise are given during one time period.

6. Delete all stroke-sequence arrows on traced letters. Only the stroke-sequence model letter at the top of the page retains the numbered arrows.

7. Reduce the starting dots to a size inbetween the present size and the size of the small tracing dots.

8. The following is a list of the sequence of letters and numbers by unit:

   Unit 1: Ll, Tt, Ii, Ee, Hh, Ww
   Unit 2: Nn, Oo, Aa, Pp, Rr, 23
   Unit 3: Ss, Dd, Uu, Mm, Bb, 45
   Unit 4: Ff, Cc, Gg, Kk, 67, 89
   Unit 5: Jj, Xx, Vv, Qq, Yy, Zz

   (Note that "Ss" was placed in Unit 3 and replaced by "Rr" in Unit 2.)

*The suggestions would produce inconsistencies in stroke sequence and starting points of certain letters. Therefore, the Handwriting Program will continue to use the formations of letters and numbers in the California State Series.

9. Renumber the Letter Formation Exercises in each unit as follows:

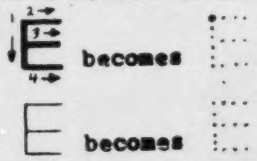
   Unit 1: Exercises 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 9
   Units 2-5: Exercises 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 10

ADDITIONAL PRACTICE EXERCISES

1. Remove these exercises from the regular program and establish them as additional practice or remedial exercises to be used before or after Criterion Check Exercises or both or not at all.

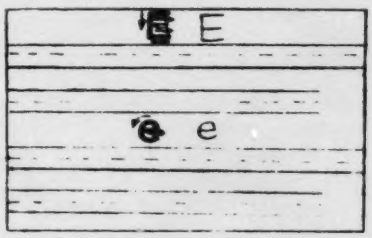
2. Change the type font of the unit and exercise identification to a smaller and lighter font.

3. Change the model letters to the left of the page so that they are traced letters (dotted). The stroke-sequence model letter changes to a traced letter with a starting dot, and the regular model letter changes to a traced letter without a starting dot.

   Example: 

4. Increase the number of responses on each side of the exercise from 24 to 28 (seven per row with four rows).

5. Add above each two practice rows, on both sides of the page, a stroke-sequence model letter and one regular model letter.

   Example: 

6. On Side 1 decrease by 1/16" the spaces between the first two guideline sets, the last two guideline sets, and the last guideline set from the bottom of the page. Allow as much space as possible between the second and third guideline sets (up to 1/8" or 1 3/16"). In addition, raise the Name guideline set as close to the top as possible, and raise the first guideline set that much closer to the Name guideline set.

7. On Side 2 raise the first guideline set to within 1¼" from the top and allow 1¼" between the second and third guideline sets.

8. Add an illustration after the second row on both sides of the page, so that each letter to be practiced has a fill-in picture (two illustrations on each side of the exercise).

9. Reduce the starting dots to a size inbetween the present size and the size of the small tracing dots.

10. Renumber these exercises with the number of the unit in which they appear and letters in the order they appear (i.e., Unit 1 Exercise A, Unit 1 Exercise B, Unit 1 Exercise C; Unit 2 Exercise A, Unit 2 Exercise B, Unit 2 Exercise C).

WRITTEN AND ORAL EXERCISES

1. Delete.

STORY WRITING EXERCISES

1. See Page 9 for the specifications for Story Writing Exercises.

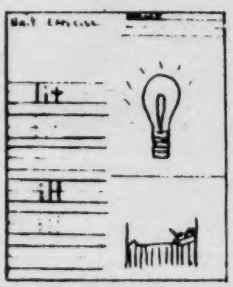
2. Change the type font of the unit and exercise identification to a lighter and smaller font.

3. Reduce the number of words in the exercise from six to four, with two words on each side.

4. Increase the number of responses in the exercise from six to eight, by having two responses per word. In the first three exercises the first response for each word is to be traced while the second response is without tracing dots. After the third exercise both responses are without tracing dots.

5. Change the format of the exercise by having two words to the left with two guideline sets below each word on each side of the page. To the right a picture is added to illustrate each model word. Delete the vertical line in the center of the page and add a horizontal line in the middle between the third and fourth guideline sets.

Example:



6. Increase the number of Story Writing Exercises from three to five per unit. The following is a list of the words to be copied in the order they appear in Unit 1 (note change in the exercise numbers):

   Exercise 4: lit, ill, I, it
   Exercise 6: eel, Tie, Lie, tile
   Exercise 8: hit, Heel, hill, Teeth
   Exercise 10: White, wee, well, tweet
   Exercise 11: wheel, Little, tell, With

7. Add two more exercises to each unit, with the five exercises numbered as follows:

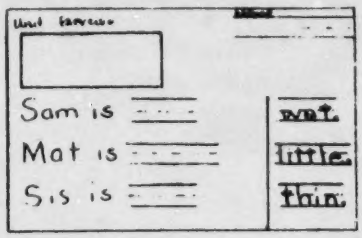
   Units 2-5: Exercises 2, 4, 6, 8, 11

8. Sentences for these exercises have been revised and rewritten according to the Mod 2 First-Year Storybook Words by Ginny Supple.

9. Change the format of the five exercises in Unit 2 to the following format (which is the same as that of Unit 2, Lesson 2, in the 1971-72 Program Tryout, except that punctuation is to be copied as well as the model word):

   - all exercises in Unit 2 are to have six single-word responses with six sentences
   - the model word to the right is the same size as the child's response (1" high)
   - the guidelines remain with the model words throughout Unit 2

   Example:

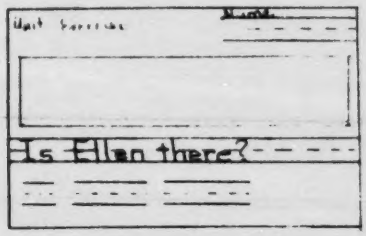


10. Change the format of the five exercises in Unit 3 to the following format:

    - Side 1 has a model sentence across the page in a continued (unbroken) guideline set
    - directly below the model sentence are guideline sets the exact length of each word in the sentence above with ½" between each guideline set to prompt correct spacing of words in a sentence
    - the guidelines stop at the end of the sentence in the response guideline sets
    - the model letters and guidelines are 1" high
    - 3/4" separates the model sentence from the response guideline sets below

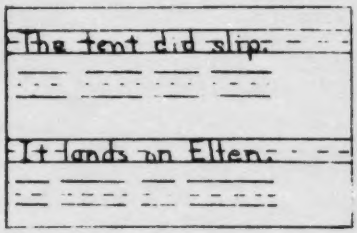
. an illustration is between the unit and exercise identification and the model sentence

Example:



. Side 2 has two model sentences with discontinued response guideline sets below each one to prompt spacing
. the first model sentence is 3/4" from the guideline set below, as is the second model sentence from the response guideline set below it
. inbetween the first response guideline set and the second model sentence is 1½"
. no illustration appears on Side 2

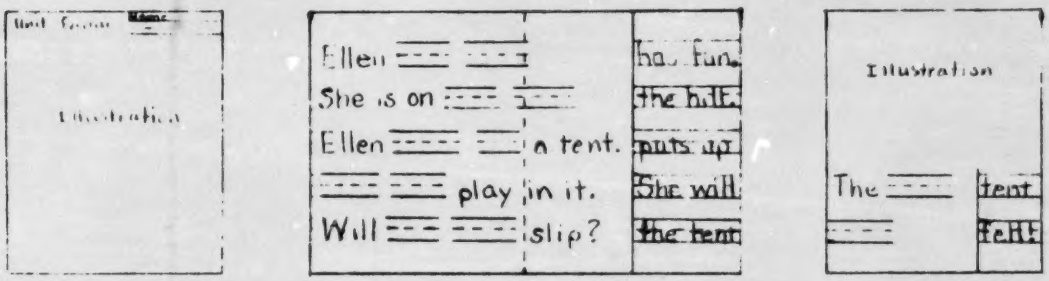
Example:



11. Develop the format of the five exercises in Unit 4 as follows:

. the exercises have a similar format to that of Unit 2, but there are two model words to be copied and filled in for each sentence
. each exercise is on a four-page folder with five sentences appearing across the inside center, and one sentence appearing on the back page
. guideline sets for responses are discontinued (broken) to prompt spacing through Exercise 2
. an illustration appears on the front page of the folder and a second illustration appears on the back page

Example:



Front Center Back

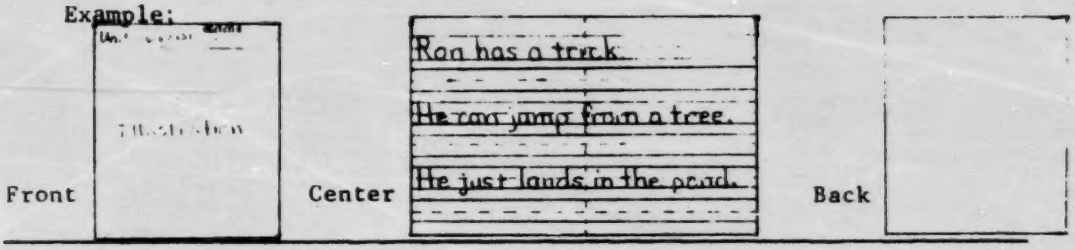
. in the last three exercises in Unit 4 the response guideline sets are continued (unbroken) so that spacing is not prompted

Example: It lands | on Elten.

12. Develop the format of the five exercises in Unit 5 as follows:

. the exercises have the same format as that of Unit 3, but the response guideline sets are continued (unbroken) so that spacing is not prompted
. each exercise is on a four-page folder with the three sentences appearing across the inside center, with an illustration on the front page, and the last page blank

Example:



CRITERION CHECKS

1. Delete the oral (dictation) part of the exercise (Side 1 in the 1971-72 Program Tryout).

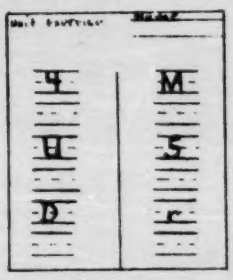
2. Change the type font of the unit and exercise identification to a lighter and smaller font.

3. Change the format so that six model letters and/or numbers appear on each side of the exercise for a total of 12 (the number of letters and/or numbers presented in the unit).

4. Delete the illustrations on the front side of the exercise, and center the two columns of six guideline sets each on either side of the vertical line in the middle of the page on both sides of the exercise.

5. Place each model letter with a guideline set directly below it for the response.

Example:



6. Change the exercise number from 18 to 12 for all units.

7. Reorder the letters and numbers to they appear in the order that they come in the unit.

CRITERION CHECK RECORD SHEET

1. Change the paper size from 8½" x 11" to 11" x 17", folded in the middle.

2. Place the Record Sheet on the inside of the folder extending across the entire width of the paper.

8. Change the title on the upper left side of the inside left page to SWRL LEVEL 1 COMPOSITION SKILLS PROGRAM, and on the upper right side of the inside right page add "School _____" under "Teacher _____."

4. Number the Name lines (1-35) at the far left side of the inside left page, and lenthen the Name lines from 2½" to 4½" (including numbers).

5. Add Units 4 and 5 with their respective letters and numbers.

6. The sequence of letters and numbers on the Record Sheet is as follows:

   Unit 1 - L, l, T, t, I, i, E, e, H, h, W, w
   Unit 2 - N, n, O, o, A, a, P, p, R, r, 2, 3
   Unit 3 - S, s, D, d, U, u, M, m, B, b, 4, 5
   Unit 4 - F, f, C, c, G, g, K, k, 6, 7, 8, 9
   Unit 5 - J, j, X, x, V, v, Q, q, Y, y, Z, z

7. Widen each letter column so as to fill up the 12½" remaining after the Name section.

8. The front of the outside of the folder contains directions for using the Record Sheet.

9. The back page of the folder contains the LETTER EVALUATION GUIDE (the same guide as on the back of the SWRL LEVEL 1 COMPOSITION SKILLS TEST RECORD CARD).

SPECIFICATIONS FOR STORY WRITING EXERCISES

UNIT & EXERCISE	# OF LETTERS COPIED	# OF WORDS COPIED	# OF SENTENCES	MODEL SIZE	SPACING PROMPTED YES	SPACING PROMPTED NO	MODEL POSITION
Unit 1							
Ex. 4	18	4	---	1"	x		above
Ex. 6	26	4	---	1"	x		above
Ex. 8	32	4	---	1"	x		above
Ex. 10	34	4	---	1"	x		above
Ex. 11	38	4	---	1"	x		above
Unit 2							
Ex. 2	18	6	6	1"	x		right
Ex. 4	20	6	6	1"	x		right
Ex. 6	22	6	6	1"	x		right
Ex. 8	22	6	6	1"	x		right
Ex. 11	23	6	6	1"	x		right
Unit 3							
Ex. 2	39	12	3	1"	x		above
Ex. 4	42	13	3	1"	x		above
Ex. 6	41	13	3	1"	x		above
Ex. 8	47	16	3	1"	x		above
Ex. 11	51	16	3	1"	x		above
Unit 4							
Ex. 2	42*	12	6	1"	x		right
Ex. 4	42*	12	6	1"	x		right
Ex. 6	43*	12	6	1"		x	right
Ex. 8	43	12	6	1"		x	right
Ex. 11	46	12	6	1"		x	right
Unit 5							
Ex. 2	50	16	3	1"		x	above
Ex. 4	55	18	3	1"		x	above
Ex. 6	58**	19	3	1"		x	above
Ex. 8	64**	21	3	1"		x	above
Ex. 11	70**	21	3	1"		x	above

* exclamation point copied
** question mark copied

TEACHER'S GUIDE

SWRL COMPOSITION SKILLS PROGRAM LEVEL 1

The SWRL Composition Skills Program is designed to promote basic planning, writing and editing skills of primary-grade children. Level 1 of the four-level program is normally administered in kindergarten and focuses on the attainment of handwriting skills prerequisite to subsequent composition instruction.[1] During this level, the children learn the following handwriting skills:

. Print each capital and lowercase letter of the alphabet.

. Write the digit-numerals through 9.

. Write words and sentences with proper spacing.

Instruction and practice for these outcomes are provided by a variety of materials. The materials consist of 60 20-minute lessons divided into five units of 12 lessons each. Some of the lesson exercises involve the formation of individual letters, while others involve the writing of brief stories referenced to illustrations. Three additional practice exercises are also provided for each of the five units.

MATERIALS

Letter Formation Exercises

These exercises present initial instruction and practice on the formation of each letter or digit. Within each exercise the children progress from tracing a letter to forming it by referring to a model at the top of the page. Two letters (usually the upper- and lowercase version of the same letter) are introduced in each Letter Formation Exercise, and the children write each letter a total of 28 times. The ability to name each letter by sight is <u>not</u> a prerequisite for completing these exercises. There are six Letter Formation Exercises in each of the five program units for a total of 30 exercises.

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[1] In some instances, Level 1, rather than Level 2, may be required in first grade. A Level 2 Entry-Skills Test is available for making this decision at the beginning of first grade.

Story Writing Exercises

In Story Writing Exercises, the children begin by writing single, illustrated words (Unit 1). They then write in words missing from sentences in illustrated stories (Unit 2). The children systematically progress, until by the end of the program (Unit 5) they are writing entire three-sentence stories with proper spacing between words. Five Story Completion Exercises are provided for each unit.

Criterion Checks and Record Sheet

At the end of each unit, Criterion Checks are provided which enable the teacher to identify children who need additional practice on letters or digits taught in the unit. A Criterion Check Record Sheet makes it possible to record the cumulative progress of each individual child.

Additional Practice Exercises

Three Additional Practice Exercises are provided for each unit. Each exercise provides opportunities for further practice on four of the unit's 12 letters or digits. The Additional Practice Exercises are designed to be used following each Criterion Check with specific children whose scores indicate further practice is needed on certain letters or digits. The Additional Practice Exercises may also be used prior to the Criterion Check with any or all children.

Letter and Numeral Cards

In addition to the above exercises and tests, a set of 35 5"x8" Letter and Numeral Cards is provided. Each alphabet card contains the lowercase version of the letter on one side and the capital or uppercase version on the other side. Cards for each digit-numeral are also provided. Numbered arrows are shown for each letter or digit to indicate stroke direction and sequence. The cards are used when introducing each new letter or digit with a Letter Formation Exercise.

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SCHEDULING OPTIONS

Figure 1 on Page 4 shows the unit organization of the exercises and sequence in which letters and digits are introduced. This chart will be useful in scheduling the exercises throughout the school year.

Various scheduling options will each give children the opportunity to complete the program by the end of the school year:

- Schedule three exercises per week and allow four weeks to complete each of the five units. Conduct any remediation that may be required, using Additional Practice Exercises concurrently with the first week of instruction on the next unit. The program can then be completed in 20 weeks. First grades using Level 1 should use this schedule so as to begin Level 2 of the Composition Skills Program about March.

- Schedule three exercises per week, but allow five weeks for each unit. During the fifth week, children can complete Additional Practice Exercises, as needed. This schedule will require 30 weeks for program completion.

- Schedule three exercises per week, but allow six weeks for Units 1 and 2 and four weeks for each of the remaining units. This is done to allow two 20-minute sessions for each of the six Letter Formation Exercises in each of the first two units. As printing fluency increases, the regular four-week-per-unit schedule can be maintained after Unit 2. This schedule requires a total of 24 weeks.

- Schedule two exercises per week, and allow six weeks to complete each unit. Use Additional Practice Exercises, as needed, concurrently with the first week of instruction the next unit. This schedule requires 30 weeks for completion of the program.

Various combinations of these options and other options are, of course, possible. The important consideration is that children have an opportunity to complete the entire program during the year. This requires that the exercises begin early in the school year, preferably by mid-October at the latest.

FIGURE 1

EXERCISE SEQUENCE

Unit	Exercise	Type
1	1	Letter Formation (Ll)
	2	Letter Formation (Tt)
	3	Letter Formation (Ii)
	4	Story Writing
	5	Letter Formation (Ee)
	6	Story Writing
	7	Letter Formation (Hh)
	8	Story Writing
	9	Letter Formation (Ww)
	10	Story Writing
	11	Story Writing
	12	Criterion Check
2	1	Letter Formation (Nn)
	2	Story Writing
	3	Letter Formation (Oo)
	4	Story Writing
	5	Letter Formation (Aa)
	6	Story Writing
	7	Letter Formation (Pp)
	8	Story Writing
	9	Letter Formation (Rr)
	10	Letter Formation (23)
	11	Story Writing
	12	Criterion Check
3	1	Letter Formation (Ss)
	2	Story Writing
	3	Letter Formation (Dd)
	4	Story Writing
	5	Letter Formation (Uu)
	6	Story Writing
	7	Letter Formation (Mm)
	8	Story Writing
	9	Letter Formation (Bb)
	10	Letter Formation (45)
	11	Story Writing
	12	Criterion Check
4	1	Letter Formation (Ff)
	2	Story Writing
	3	Letter Formation (Cc)
	4	Story Writing
	5	Letter Formation (Gg)
	6	Story Writing
	7	Letter Formation (Kk)
	8	Story Writing
	9	Letter Formation (67)
	10	Letter Formation (89)
	11	Story Writing
	12	Criterion Check
5	1	Letter Formation (Jj)
	2	Story Writing
	3	Letter Formation (Xx)
	4	Story Writing
	5	Letter Formation (Vv)
	6	Story Writing
	7	Letter Formation (Qq)
	8	Story Writing
	9	Letter Formation (Yy)
	10	Letter Formation (Zz)
	11	Story Writing
	12	Criterion Check

During the year, it is best to schedule a definite 20-minute period for the handwriting exercises three (or two) days each week. Also, remember that letter-naming ability is not a prerequisite for this program. If desired, children can practice learning letter names concurrently with the handwriting instruction.

TEACHING PROCEDURES

During the development of the Level 1 Composition Skills Program, the exercises were tried out in many classrooms over a period of several years. During this time teachers suggested procedures for obtaining maximum results with the materials. These procedures will be useful and should be referred to often. General instructional procedures relating to all program materials are contained in Section 2. Procedures specific to each type of instructional exercise are contained in Section 3. Procedures for administering and scoring Criterion Checks are contained in Section 4. Special procedures for troublesome letters are contained in Section 5, along with an alphabet chart.

The materials and suggested teaching procedures are based on commonly accepted principles of instruction:

- Appropriate Practice. Children must practice the skills described in the Program's objectives. In the Level 1 Composition Skills Program, all activities are directed toward printing letters and numerals with proper spacing.

- Frequent Practice. Each child should have many opportunities for practicing the specified handwriting skills. The Letter Formation Exercises provide extensive initial practice. Many additional practice responses are contained in the Story Writing Exercises. Additional Practice Exercises provide even further instructional practice for those children who need them.

. Knowledge of Results. Children should regularly be encouraged and praised for good letter formation and for making progress. Inadequately formed letters should be pointed out to the child and constructive suggestions should be provided during (not just after) each exercise.

SOME COMMON CONCERNS OF TEACHERS

1. Are kindergarten children really ready for handwriting in the fall? Why not wait until after Christmas?

It is, of course, possible to begin the program in January and use the previously described 20-week completion schedule. Most kindergarten teachers, however, have encountered no problems in beginning the program in the fall, and using a more leisurely schedule. These teachers were in schools encompassing the total range of school locations. The best procedure is to begin the program as soon as possible.

2. What about basic beginning skills, such as posture, holding the pencil correctly, and positioning the paper properly?

Procedures specific to developing these basic beginning skills in connection with administering the instructional exercises of Level 1 of the SWRL Composition Skills Program are contained in Section 2. Children acquire these important skills as they begin the program.

3. How will the children be able to read the words in the Story Writing Exercises?

Many kindergarten classes and all first grade classes receive a regular program of reading instruction. In these cases, the Level 1 Composition Skills Program will support and reinforce the reading instruction very well. If children are not receiving regular reading instruction, the Story Writing Exercises are still most useful for developing basic handwriting skills. Simply read over each story

with the children before they begin writing the words and sentences. They will enjoy the story and the accompanying illustrations.

4. What evidence is there that this program really works?

Tryout of an earlier version of the Level 1 Program was conducted in 1971-72 in eight representative kindergarten classes in a range of locations. At the beginning of the year only 23 percent of the letters and digits written by the tryout children received ratings of "3" (fairly legible), "4" (quite legible), or "5" (very legible). By the end of the year, however, over 90 percent of the letters written by these children received ratings of "3" or higher. In addition, preference data indicated that the children preferred writing-related tasks (printing name, writing letters, copying letters) significantly more than children in comparison classes.

SECTION 2

GENERAL TEACHING PROCEDURES

The following general teaching procedures are essential if the children are to derive the maximum benefit from the exercises. These procedures are the result of comments and suggestions by teachers participating in previous tryouts of the program.

- Beginning Skills. When administering the first few Letter Formation Exercises, have the children practice the basic beginning skills. The following skills should be developed: (1) sitting with the chair directly facing and close to the desk or table; (2) sitting erectly with proper posture; (3) holding the pencil between thumb and forefinger with it resting on the middle finger, and holding it down towards the lead end; (4) positioning the paper properly so that it angles up slightly on the right side (opposite for left-handed children), and holding it in position with the other hand; and (5) lifting the pencil at the end of each stroke when forming letters.

- Arrows. Teach the children the meaning of numbered arrows showing stroke direction and sequence for letters and digits, so that proper letter formation will be continuously practiced after the Letter Formation Exercises have been completed. It is important that the children learn the proper stroke directions and sequences right at the beginning. With this standard printing system, the children need to learn only the three basic stroke directions. Increasing in difficulty, they are top-to-bottom, left-to-right, and curved (both clockwise and counter-clockwise). All of the letters and digits are formed by using one, two, or all three of these basic strokes.

- Letter and Numeral Cards. When working with single letters or numerals, use the Letter and Numeral Cards to provide models for naming the characters and demonstrating the stroke sequence. Use only the letter name during handwriting instruction. Do not discuss its sound or other qualities, such as whether it is a vowel or a consonant, or associate the letters with the children's names, as these tend to make the exercises more involved and less clear to the children.

- Helping Children. As the exercises begin, quickly observe each child's first few responses to catch any major letter-formation errors, then return to those children who need additional attention. To help evaluate the acceptability of letters formed by the

children, the Letter Evaluation Guide is provided on the back of the Criterion Check Record Sheet and Program Test. Use the following procedures when helping the children: (1) point out the model letter the child is copying from; (2) encourage the child to tell you how he can correct his letter to form it like the model letter; (3) if need be, review the stroke sequence with him; and (4) have the child make the letter several times under your guidance.

. Erasing. If a few children are making major errors in letter formation, such as improper stroke sequence or letter reversals, encourage these children to go on under your guidance rather than erase. In this way, both the teacher and the child can see the previous errors and work towards correcting them.

. Positive Approach. To further help the children improve the letters they form, draw a star by or circle the best letter or part of a letter that they have made and tell them what you like about it. Then ask them to make more letters which have this good quality. Praise any improvement.

. Aides. If teacher aides are available, encourage them to assist you in checking the children as they work, guiding children according to these general procedures.

. Extra Practice. At the end of each exercise collect and examine the exercises. You may find that several children are making the same type of error. Additional small-group or individual practice may be provided by having the children work through extra copies of the exercises; or by providing lined paper and presenting letters, digits, or words on flashcards to the children so that they may practice copying the models. The Additional Practice Exercises may also be used prior to the Criterion Check, if necessary.

In addition to the above procedures, procedures specific for each lesson type are contained in Section 3.

SECTION 3

PROCEDURES FOR SPECIFIC LESSON TYPES

Letter Formation Exercises

. Display the appropriate letter card as a model before beginning the Letter Formation Exercise. Name the letter, but do not discuss its sound or other qualities during handwriting instruction. Go over the stroke direction and sequence with the children, and then distribute the exercise.

. Have the children name the model stroke-sequence letter at the top of the page to the left on the exercise. Demonstrate where the letter begins and what the proper stroke direction and stroke sequence are by pointing to the model letter. Have the children count out the stroke sequence with you while following the stroke directions with their fingers.

. Have the children point to the model letter to the right of the stroke-sequence model at the top of the page. Tell them to look at that letter each time they write a letter in the row and to be sure their letter looks like the model.

. Have the children begin tracing the letters in the first row. Check each child at this time to be sure he is starting the letter at the large dot and is making the letter strokes in the proper direction and sequence.

. When you have checked each child and the first row has been completed satisfactorily, have the children complete the exercise.

. Circulate and monitor the children while they are completing the exercise. Remind them to compare their letters with the model letters at the top of the page.

. When helping the children improve forming the letters, say something like, "This letter is best/better. See if you can make some more for me that are like this one/changed like this (demonstrate) to be even better."

. Be sure to have the children line up their letters in the last row with the letters in the rows above so that seven evenly-spaced letters will be written. Have the children complete the "surprise" picture at the end of the row.

. Repeat the above procedures for the second side of the exercise.

Story Writing Exercises (Units 1 Through 5)

(The task progression from unit to unit is as follows:
Unit 1 - The children trace and write words. Illustrations are provided for each word.
Unit 2 - The children write in single words to complete an illustrated story.
Unit 3 - The children write three-sentence stories.
Unit 4 - The children write in two-word phrases to complete a story.
Unit 5 - The children write longer three-sentence stories.)

. According to the unit format, tell the children that they will either be writing words which fit into sentences to complete a story or writing entire sentences in a story. Allow the children to examine the illustrations briefly.

. Read through the story with the children.

. Point to where the children are to write the words or sentences. Then have the children complete the exercise, while you circulate among them and provide help when necessary.

. Be sure the children include ending punctuation marks (periods, exclamation points, question marks) where required.

. Check for the spacing of letters within words and words within sentences. Tell the children to write the words "a finger apart" or to leave a space the size of the letter "o" between each word.

. If desired, have different children read aloud their completed stories.

Additional Practice Exercises

. These exercises are designed to be used following each Criterion Check with specific children whose scores indicate further practice is needed on certain letters. Procedures for assigning the Additional Practice Exercises following each Criterion Check are found in Section 4. However, the exercises may also be used prior to the Criterion Check with any or all children if necessary.

. These exercises may be sent home with the children for additional help from parents in practicing the proper letter formations.

. Administer these exercises, using procedures similar to those for the Letter Formation Exercises.

SECTION 4

PROCEDURES FOR ADMINISTERING AND SCORING CRITERION CHECKS

Criterion Checks

- Tell the children that they are going to write the letters they have been practicing and that they are to copy each letter or numeral in the space below it.

- Point to the first letter and then to the blank space where it is to be written. Have the children complete the exercise filling in all 12 blanks on the front and back of the exercise.

- Encourage the children to write the letters and/or numerals as well as they can. Do not help the children, as those who require additional practice need to be identified.

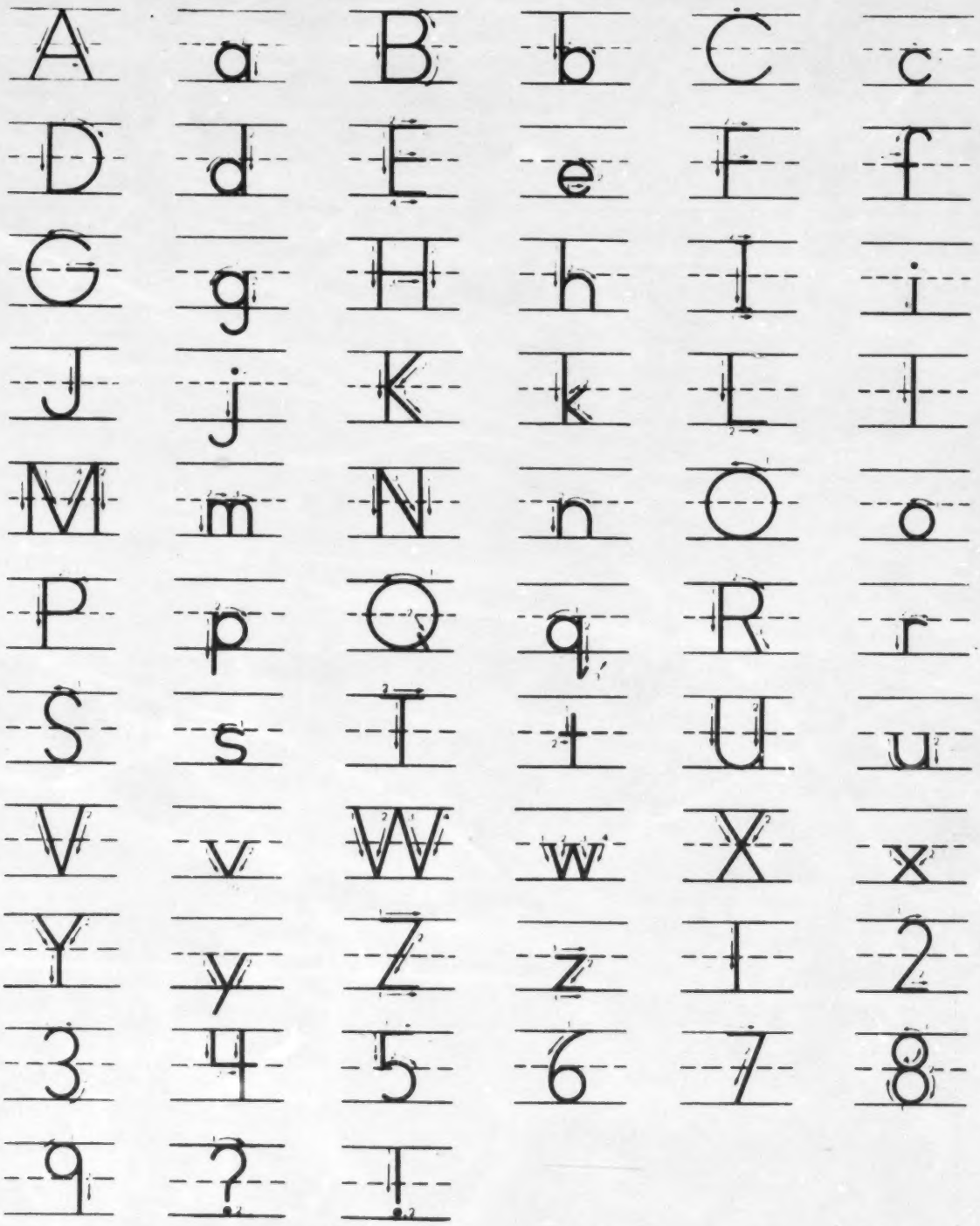
- Score each letter or numeral using the Letter Evaluation Guide. This is found on the back of the Criterion Check Record Sheet.

- Record the children's scores for each letter or numeral in the appropriate boxes on the Criterion Check Record Sheet.

- Additional Practice Exercises should be provided on any letter or numeral rated "3" or less. These may be administered to individuals or to groups of children requiring additional practice on the same character.

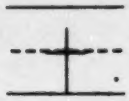
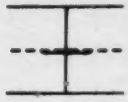
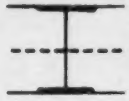
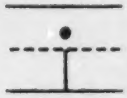
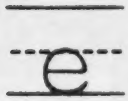
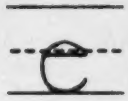
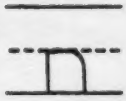
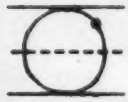
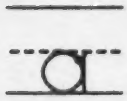
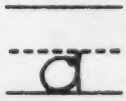
SECTION 5

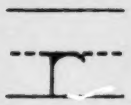
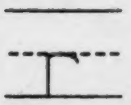
ALPHABET CHART



TROUBLESOME LETTERS

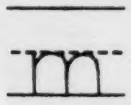
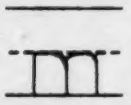
Below are letters on which children traditionally make errors. Be sure to watch for these as you come to the exercises indicated.

	CORRECT		INCORRECT		
Unit 1					
Exercise 2:		not			
Exercise 3:		not			
		not		or	
Exercise 5:		not		or	
Exercise 9:		not			
Unit 2					
Exercise 1:		not			
Exercise 3:		not		or	
Exercise 5:		not			
		not			

Exercise 9:  not 

Unit 3

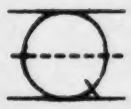
Exercise 7: not

 not 

Exercise 9: not

Unit 5

Exercise 1: not or

Exercise 7:  not

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